

MAYOR'S ADVISORY GROUP
AUGUST 15, 2006

MINUTES

Members Present

Joseph Donaldson
Gene Westerhaus
Nat White
Karl Baumgartner
David Camacho
Eric Norgard
Lee Treece

Members Absent

Tara Green - Excused
Judy Boyer - Excused
Julie Pastrick
Dana Russell - Excused
Robert Magnuson
Renee Fauset
Mitch Strohman - Excused
Coral Evans - Excused
Joanne Keene

Staff – Guests – Visitors Present

Dave Wilcox, City Manager
Wendy White
William B. Pribil
Brent Cooper
Margie Brown

Called to order at 6:51 a.m.

Approval of Minutes: Moved by David Camacho, seconded by Karl Burkhalter, unanimous vote in favor.

Eric Norgard, NAU Student Body President, was introduced and welcomed as the newest member of the Advisory Committee.

Coconino County Criminal Justice

Wendy White provided information on the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council and crime statistics. Numerous jurisdictions are involved in the Coordinating Council including the City, County, different courts, sheriffs, police departments, various law enforcement agencies, counties, prosecutors and defense attorneys, judges; and related agencies providing services within the system. The Council has been operating for a year and a half and it is now a permanent entity whose purpose is to work more collaboratively among the agencies. Meetings are conducted every other month and they are currently working on developing policies and procedures to improve efficiencies and outcomes. They have created a mental health court for the City of Flagstaff focusing on individuals with mental illness that will help individuals who frequently come through the system in the hope that positive results will be seen in terms of treatment and incidents of recidivism. It should be implemented in City Court by the end of September.

A copy of the Flagstaff Police Department Annual Report was handed out to committee members. Compared to Flagstaff's population, the crime rate is very high. Aggravated violence cases are slightly down over the last couple of years and clearance rates compared to the national rate are down. Flagstaff

is a safe community, but there are areas within the community that have larger problems. In those neighborhoods, felony thefts are high. Studies have linked public intoxicants and transient activity to increases in crime in neighborhoods. There is a large methamphetamine problem in the town and it contributes to the property crime rate.

In college towns such as Flagstaff, where students frequent bars and participate in partying, assaults are frequent. Flagstaff also has a high incidence of domestic violence.

The good news is that the partnership with the community is very high. As a result, people are much more willing to report crimes to the authorities.

Flagstaff is also a hub for northern Arizona. Some Native Americans come off the Reservation, leaving their support network behind, get drunk and they are more likely to engage in offenses. The city is also a tourist destination. Tourists represent a whole class of potential victims and criminals are attracted to the community as a result.

The community has a gang problem and immigration is impacting the crime rate. There is a percentage of the immigrating population selling drugs from Mexico; they are Mexican nationals and they are not in the law enforcement system in this country.

The law enforcement agencies are proactive on small offenses. They work closely with the school, teaching the DARE and GREAT programs. However, the programs don't have as great an impact as originally hoped for. It is only one of many tools in the draw. More resources are needed for investment in the community's youth. Unfortunately, sometimes the gang culture comes through the family.

It may be possible to graph correlations between crime statistics, education, median income, and high cost of living over the last five years.

When people are jailed, the authorities are not making the most of the time they spend at the facility. That is an opportunity for treatment and follow-up on a program. The lack of follow-through is because of lack of resources. The agencies have the resources only to warehouse individuals or transfer them to the DOC.

The Coordinating Council is tasked with getting the statistics and looking at the overall system to make improvements. They are now able to derive live jail data to look at demographics. That data, however, does not contain economic information. They can track whether the individual came through on a drug or alcohol related offense. Alcohol accounts for 22 of all the bookings into the jail. A plan needs to be developed for responding to the issues now that the Council is able to look at them.

The community needs to make up its mind what it wants to do. The problem will have to be attacked on a number of fronts and that includes families and neighborhoods. It will take a lot of money and a lot of effort. Since opening the new jail facility, northern Arizona is experiencing an increase in jail population of about 8% per year. The national average is about 3.4% per year. The bed rental has been helping to make up revenue shortfalls, but it is important to establish a reliable source of revenue other than bed rentals. As the local population goes up, less beds are available for rentals and the revenue source is dwindling. The increase in the jail tax that is proposed will help the jail become solvent and help the authorities to intervene in some of these individuals' lives by opening a therapeutic treatment operation. In 32 years, nothing has changed locally in the approach to recidivism. Changing lives will ultimately make a change in the community.

In northern Arizona, the Flagstaff Police Department and the County Sheriff's Office have a great relationship. Co-location has lent itself to a lot of open communication between the two agencies and helps with crime solving.

\$44,000,000 was spent on the criminal justice system last year; consequently, it is important to investigate the allocation of funds to see if different priorities can be established that will better need the community's needs.

The northern Arizona criminal justice community is currently on the cutting edge. There is nothing else like it in Arizona. Northern Arizona University is not currently a partner and the university Police Department has not yet been incorporated into the Council. In addition, the Flagstaff Unified School District needs to have representation. The secret to success will be working with the community's youth. A rehabilitation program is needed in order to break the cycle.

Upcoming Meeting Topics:

Discussion was held on possible topics to discuss at next meeting. Decision made to have a follow-up presentation from the courts and/or justice system scheduled for next month.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:25 am.